DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 131 308 CE 008 952

TITLE	Cooperative Education for the American Indian in Dallas County. Mountain View College. Dallas County Community College District.
INSTITUTION	Dallas County Community Coll. District, Tex.; Texas Education Agency, Austin. Div. of Occupational Research and Development.
REPORT NO	VT-103-284
NOTE	21p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*American Indians; *Community Colleges; *Cooperative Education; Junior Colleges; Models; Program Descriptions; Student Needs; *Urban Education; Urban Population; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	Texas (Dallas County)

ABSTRACT

This project developed and tested the feasibility of a cooperative educational model for the urban Indian in a community college setting. Recruitment and identification of participating students were conducted by a task force through contact with Indian organizations, churches, and informally. The report includes a discussion of the importance of counseling, the special problems facing the Indian student, and the response of some of the Dallas area employers. Included also is a brief general description of the employment status and career goals of the students as well as a profile of American Indian students in the Dallas County Community College District colleges. Based on the stated needs of the Indian students and of those who expressed interest in more education, the following prescriptions were developed for a model: (1) The work experience should be a paying job equal to an entry-level position, (2) the course work should be flexible enough to allow adaptation to work schedule, (3) all co-op activities should be coordinated, and (4) the program should contain a career exploration component. (NJ)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED131308

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION FOR THE AMERICAN INDIAN IN DALLAS COUNTY

MOUNTAIN VIEW COLLEGE

DALLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

DEVELOPED JOINTLY BY

The Division of Occupational Research and Development, Department of Occupational and Technical Education, Texas Education Agency Project Number 42309082 1973-74

and

Dallas County Community College District
Dallas, Texas

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

PROJECT DIRECTOR

Stella Lawrence

Cover Design -- Mike Hulme

CE 008 952

VT 103 284

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to express their appreciation to the Indian community of Dallas for their cooperation in the development and implementation of this study. Additional groups that deserve special recognition for the time and effort spent on the study include:

- Members of the Indian Advisory Committee
- Inter-Tribal Christian Center
- American Indian Center
- Dallas Council of Choctaws
- Office of Special Services staff, DCCCD
- Members of the Dallas news media

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
I.	Introduction	1
II.	History	1
III.	Purpose of the Project	5
IV.	Methodology	5
	A. Recruitment/Identification	5
	B. Counseling	8
	C. Employers	9
	D. The Student	12
V.	Conclusions/Recommendations	14

I. INTRODUCTION

As the need for qualified American Indian people becomes apparent in all areas of our society, more effective training programs are necessary. Many new concepts have been tried, but few have equipped Indian People with the necessary skills to compete in a highly technical, highly competitive working society. One approach being used by some post-secondary institutions for training in highly technical areas is Cooperative Education (the term "cooperative" describes the working relationship between school and employer in preparing students for selected vocations). This method of instruction not only affords the student valuable work experience, but also an income.

Cooperative Education is not new, however, it has only recently received national recognition as a major concept in programs associated with a variety of educational disciplines. Cooperative Education as an educational tool has grown increasingly popular during the past decade and is considered by many to be highly successful as a means of teaching and motivating students.

Further, Cooperative Education has also become more popular because of generally depressed economic conditions, high unemployment rates, high school and college graduates without marketable skills, and returning students who need upgrading or new skills.

II. HISTORY

In April, 1973 the Dallas County Community College District in

cooperation with the Division of Occupational Research and Development, Texas Education Agency, completed a research project to determine the educational and employment needs of the American Indian in Dallas County. Because the American Indians are a mobile, transit group, often wary of "new" assistance programs, a door-to-door survey was necessary to ascertain their needs.

The survey included face-to-face interviews with 1,260 Indian residents, 16 years of age and older. The results of that survey clearly show a need for educational and occupational assistance in the Indian community. Of the number employed, a large percentage were below the age of thirty. Of the 64% who were employed, 86% indicated a desire to go back to school to upgrade themselves or to obtain a different and/or better job.*

Throughout the survey a great deal of interest was shown in training for management and eventual self-employment. However, there were only eight self-employed Indians in the 1,260 family units included in the survey. Of all those employed, 88% were in non-management positions.

Further, thirty-six indicated they were unemployed. Of those unemployed, 25% had been unemployed from one to three months, 14% had been unemployed from three to six months, 18% had been unemployed from six months to one year, and 42% had been unemployed for one year or longer. The reasons given for unemployment indicated a need for skill development.

* "A Survey of the Occupational and Educational Needs of the American Indian In Dallas County" is on file with the Division of Occupational Research and Development, Texas Education Agency.

The Indian people interviewed in the survey expressed a desire to continue education and training in order to "make it" in today's technological society. However, few Indians were continuing their education and those who were did so on an irregular basis.

Although only 23% of the people surveyed were continuing their education, an additional 64% indicated they would be willing to do so if it would better their lives.

Because American Indians have often been channelled into training programs that do not lead to relevant and meaningful jobs, their need for a truly practical education may be even more strongly felt than most.

Interviews and discussions with Dallas Indians, plus years of experience on the part of the staff, have created the following impressions:

1. Indians interviewed are in low-skill and low-paying jobs and want to upgrade themselves.
2. Since a majority of the Indians in Dallas are young and have families, it is necessary that they have a steady income while completing their education. According to the survey, the average Indian living in Dallas meets these characteristics:
   a. Twenty-five years of age
   b. Married
   c. Three children
   d. Relatives living in the home
   e. Less than a high school education
   f. Some vocational training

g. Manual skills

h. Resident of Dallas less than one year

i. Rural background

3. Many urban American Indians have:

a. Received inadequate training in one or more occupations

b. Had limited opportunity for training in the highly-skilled and high-paying professions

c. Received training that is now obsolete or training for jobs that no longer exist or exist at a minimal level

Additionally, many are married men and women who work at a low-skill job, have two or more dependents, and must continue working while attending school. Most need or will need financial aid.

4. A significant number of Indians are considered to be high risks for educational assistance by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (B.I.A.), and others do not qualify for assistance for other reasons. These include:

a. Indians who have taken employment assistance training from the B.I.A. in the past. (The B.I.A. restricts Indians to one training program.)

b. Indians considered too old for B.I.A. Assistance.

5. Because of the extremely low incidence of Indians in the professions or employed in managerial capacities, there are very few role models for the Indian youth to emulate.

With the above factors as a base, the problems of meeting the educational and occupational needs of the urban American Indian are brought into focus.

Meeting the needs requires the identification, development and implementation of a program based on an understanding of the self-image and basic needs of the urban American Indian.

Such a program must have the following characteristics:

1. A variety of learning situations
2. Alternative time frames
3. "Hands-on-Jobs" experience
4. A good recruiting and/or referral mechanism
5. A very strong counseling component

III. PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

As set forth in the original proposal to TEA, "Cooperative Education for American Indians in Dallas County" was designed to:

1. Develop a cooperative education model for the urban Indian
2. Test the feasibility of the model in the community college

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Recruitment/Identification

1. TASK FORCE

To assure continuous cooperation from the Indian community and to receive assistance from the business community, an informal Task Force was established. The selection of the Task Force took very little time

since most of the people had worked with the District on the prior project, "A Survey of the Occupational and Educational Needs of the American Indian in Dallas County." Advisory committee members as well as representatives from the Indian community played a major role in recruitment.

The committee helped recruit most of the students and referred new ones each week. The concern for meaningful education was expressed by all Task Force members, and they began to believe the community college was the way to obtain that experience.

The project, with the help of the committee began to reach potential students that had not been reached before (the high school student). Indian students were contacted in the Dallas Independent School District and a number in surrounding ISD's such as: Grand Prairie, Garland and Mesquite.

Previous experience indicates that the most effective way of recruiting Indian students is to establish a record of service. If someone in the Indian community is interested in what you have to offer, they will find you. This record of service was established by the DCCCD during the Indian survey project.

2. INDIAN ORGANIZATIONS AND CHURCHES

During the first two months of the Cooperative Education Project, information was disseminated to the Indian community through various Indian organizations and churches. The majority of the Indian people

contacted in this manner have had one thing in common; they need some kind of work arrangement in order to pursue training and educational programs. Occupational interests of these people include computer operations, health occupations, drafting, diesel mechanics, and social work.

An example of the close cooperation between the Indian organizations and the cooperative education project involved the Dallas Inter-Tribal Christian Center Clinic and the Project Director. While working as a volunteer at the Clinic, the Project Director met a married couple, both of whom wanted to go to college. Because of financial problems, only one could attend school. In this case the husband enrolled at Mountain View College and is presently taking Electronics courses related to his job.

Recruitment has been a relatively simple task since most of the Indian people and agencies are now fully aware of the efforts by Dallas County Community College District to serve the people. As a result, time that would have been spent on recruitment was allocated to counseling and follow-up. The counseling process involved -- helping the student identify his vocational goals, assisting with college enrollment, financial aid, and arranging work schedules.

3. PROJECT STAFF

The most successful recruitment technique proved to be the informal approach. An example of this informal approach was a party given by the Director for over fifty potential Indian students. As a result of that party,

three college dropouts decided to return to school and four high school seniors asked for assistance to enter in the fall of 1974.

Another effective activity that served both as a recruiting technique and as a contact point for counseling was the newly formed Indian club. The most pressing problem discussed in the Indian club was that of financial aid. One result of such a discussion greatly benefited an Indian family with significant financial problems. Three members of that family were attending El Centro College and a fourth was very much interested in college. After talking with the family members and Bureau of Indian Affairs personnel, the family now has four members in college. Three are on BIA grants.

B. Counseling

Personal counseling with each of the students was especially important at the end of the semester when the pressure of "making it or not making it" is the greatest. For example, one Indian student from Eastfield College, receiving financial aid from the BIA, dropped three weeks prior to the end of the semester. When located, it was determined that the student had not taken the initiative to discuss his problems with his instructors; rather he chose to drop. One entire day was spent working with his counselor and instructors to salvage his course credit. This counseling process was successful with seven out of the twelve students who withdrew during the fall semester.

The above example is an indication of the need that Indian students have for counseling by someone who understands their background, is

sensitive to their needs and is willing to go that extra step to be helpful. It has been repeatedly proven that the Indian student is hesitant to ask questions, and needs a one to one relationship with someone they can trust with their problems, dreams, and goals in order to succeed.

Some of the problems faced by the Indian student once he has been recruited into college includes:

1. The institution and the curriculum is threatening. The feeling persists among Indian students that a college education is beyond their reach.
2. Limited funds. The Indian students need supplemental funds for clothing, entertainment, etc.
3. Transportation. The basic means of transportation for the Indian student consists of walking or riding the bus.
4. Child care. Women, interested in Cooperative Education, have been forced to withdraw because of child care problems.
5. Student mobility. The movement of Indian people in and out of the city coupled with frequent moves within the city prevent effective follow-up procedures.

C. Employers

Employers in the Dallas area have been very helpful in placing the students. On several occasions the student has remained with the employer he worked for before starting school. As a result, arrangements were made

with the employer to set up a flexible schedule for the student which would allow him to attend school. The employer felt this procedure would benefit him as well as the student.

Employers have offered the following positions: machine trainees, nurses, lab technicians, social work assistants, clerks, secretaries, retail assistant managers, and accounting clerks. Almost without exception, these students feel their work experience has been very valuable and adds to their learning experience.

In our efforts to find employers who would be willing to allow students to work and stay in school, a number of employers expressed a willingness to do whatever necessary to accomodate the student; however, some were only interested in finding full time help.

Two firms replied that they did not expect to continue hiring cooperative education students.

They cited as reasons:

1. Inconsistency of production and attendance.
2. The expense and time necessary to create jobs the student could handle.

Another firm was very receptive to hiring American Indians and agreed to pay tuition if schedule and transportation problems could be worked out.

Examples of the experiences employers of Indian students encountered in cooperative education include:

- One student, cited by his employer as a good worker, quit his job, dropped out of school and returned to Oklahoma claiming he had enough experience to obtain a job back home.
- Another student was hired as a machinist at $2.85/hr., 30 hrs. a week. Now he is working 40 hrs. a week and is carrying a full load.
- An older Indian man enrolled in Developmental Studies because he did not complete the 12th grade. He is now working four days a week and plans to continue his education next fall.
- A young Indian girl, enrolled in a Medical Technology program, works in Financial Aids at El Centro College.

Contact was made with nine employers, two of whom requested and received written proposals to develop job slots that were closely related to the student's choice of study. These employers were quite responsive and agreed to help in every way possible.

Employers contacted for job slots:

Atlantic Richfield Company

City of Dallas

Continental Trailways

Dallas County Community College District

Methodist Hospital

Indian Alcoholism Project

International Harvester Co.

Raymond D. Nasher Company

Southwestern Medical School

Texas Instruments

Toward the end of the spring semester, 1974, students, employers, and community people were interviewed to determine their reactions to the cooperative vocational education project.

D. The Student

In 1972, the District colleges intensified their efforts to enroll students from the Indian community. During that year, the Indian enrollment reached fifty (50) students. In 1973, the Indian enrollment rose to over seventy-five (75). Of these students, approximately eighty-five percent (85%) work on a part or full time job. The District colleges have worked closely with these students to determine if cooperative education can give the urban Indian student the kind of educational experience necessary to reach his goals.

At least 75% of the Indian students contacted during this project had no definite career choice. Most Indian girls said they wanted to study in the health occupation or clerical fields, however 8 of 12 changed their minds once they entered one of these fields. Most of the men have had work experience and have more of an idea of what they want to do. A great deal of time is spent trying to explore, through counseling, the student's career choices.

The 88 Indian students who have enrolled in the District colleges vary in age from 19 to 44 and have career goals ranging from auto mechanics to

teaching. Some are part-time students who work full time to take care of their families, others are full time students with full scholarships from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

During the school year 1973-74, twenty-three (23) Indian students received BIA educational assistance totaling $30,952. An additional $2,100 was awarded to Indian students from Basic Educational Opportunity Grants.

PROFILE OF AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS
IN
DALLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT COLLEGES

FALL 1973

	Male	Female	Total
Students	29	26	55 *
Average age	24	30	
Total semester hours passed	199	121	
Average hours passed	7	5	
Grade point average	2.53	2.38	
Withdrawals	9	5	

SPRING 1974

	Male	Female	Total
Students	32	27	59 *
Average age	24	30	
Total semester hours passed	216	99	
Average hours passed	7	4	
Grade point average	2.44	2.67	
Withdrawals	7	8	

* Approximately 20 additional students each semester have taken Community Service (non-credit) courses.

SUMMER 1974

There are 19 American Indians presently attending summer school.

Male	Female
11	8

V. CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated in the report A Survey of the Occupational and Educational Needs of the American Indian in Dallas County, ". . . a Cooperative Education Program is ideal for American Indians because of the job placement factor. A Cooperative Education Program would permit individuals not only to obtain skills and knowledge directed toward a career but to work in career-related fields periodically to make the associations between training and work necessary for meaningful education."

IT HAS BEEN THE EXPERIENCE OF THE DCCCD THAT COOPERATIVE EDUCATION HAS BEEN AN EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL APPROACH IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN IN DALLAS COUNTY.

Some advantages to students include:

1. Classroom learning experiences become more relevant. Employment experiences serve as motivating factors by giving meaning and purpose to the theoretical and practical assignments presented as a part of the related classroom instruction.
2. Opportunities to broaden understanding and appreciation of the world of work are provided.
3. Aptitudes and interests are assessed in order to determine future educational and occupational needs.
4. A steady income, allowing the student to continue his education.

Based on what Indian students say are their needs when going to school and on what the people in the community say they would need if they were to go back to school, the following model cooperative education program has developed:

1. The work experience should be a paying job equal to an entry level position (or based on the skills of the student).

Because of the economic condition of most Indian families, students cannot afford to pay for a complete education program, even though the cost is nominal at the community colleges. There is also a sense of responsibility felt by each family member, old enough to work, to do his share in meeting the family needs. This not only means he must make enough money to meet his own needs, but must make enough above that to contribute to family needs.

2. The course work to be taken on campus should be flexible enough to allow the student sufficient options to overcome difficulty in his work schedule.

The major problem found during efforts to place students on jobs was the time conflict between the employer and the college. Employers were willing to put students to work during the day hours, but the student was already enrolled in day classes. This happened primarily because only a few programs are designed for a co-op component. In order for the Indian student to participate in a college program, the college needs several time options that allow the student to schedule his college work around his employment. After all, the employment makes it possible for him to attend

school. Work periods and school attendance should be arranged to permit a student to fulfill his work-experience portion through almost any time arrangement, half-days, full-days, weeks, or semesters. The most desirable arrangement would be a strong evening program of study on campus, leaving the student's day hours for working.

3. All co-op student activities should be coordinated.

Keeping in contact with the Indian student is one of the most critical functions of the college. Without this activity, all value would be seriously jeopardized. As pointed out in this report earlier, only through continuous contact with the Indian student have the majority of those placed been retained.

Coordination serves many other functions, other than student retention such as: (1) enabling the instructor/coordinator to see that the students are getting a meaningful work experience, (2) giving the student a chance to share any problems he may have on the job or in school with someone able to assist from both ends, (3) providing the instructor/coordinator exposure to the world of work he would otherwise not have and as a result make his instruction more meaningful.

4. If at all possible, a co-op program to serve the Indian student should have what is often referred to as a "Career-Exploration Component."

A career-exploration component could be structured in one of two ways:

1. Actual work experience where a student would obtain a job that

he "thinks" he may be interested in. He would work at this job long enough to get some idea of what that field of work offered, and depending on his reaction to the job, he would either stay with the job, set learning objectives and take related course work, or he would request a change of jobs to another area of his choice. All of this, of course, would take place within the confines of one semester.

2. The co-op project, in cooperation with other departments of the college, could set up career exploratory classes and each student who wishes to enroll in work-experience courses, but has no defined career choice would be required to take career-exploration counseling before entering a job for work-experience credit.

The DCCCD has recently completed the first year of an HEW-USOE funded project designed to strengthen and expand cooperative education in each of the four colleges of the District. American Indians have figured significantly in the planning process during this first year and will be involved in the implementation of new cooperative programs.

Cooperative Education for the American Indian in Dallas County has had an effective beginning and although the project itself is completed, there is evidence that its' effects will be long lasting. Indians in Dallas now realize that the DCCCD in cooperation with business and industry can provide meaningful educational programs to meet their needs.

OE 008 952